

***** * BMHA Newsletter * *****



* BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA *

Volume 9, Number 4

Oct/Nov/Dec 1998

EDITOR'S NOTEPAD

Excuses, Excuses!

As you must have noticed, this issue of the BMHA NewsLetter is late. It's all my fault. But, really, it's the fault of my new computer. I replaced my seven-year-old 386, Windows 3.1 PC with a Windows 95 HP Pavilion. I can tell you that 3.1 to 95 is a giant leap. Even worse was the jump from Works 2.0 (my buddy, the program that I used for years to edit and format the newsletter) to Word 97. Simply put, it was gut-wrenching. (I'm sure that many of you readers have gone through this and can sympathize with me.) Where before I could edit and format a typical article in an hour it's now taking me 3 or 4 hours. But it's slowly getting easier.

I could not have survived this ordeal without the help of local BMHAer John Einberger, N0MSA. All I had to do was call for help and John, a true PC guru, would pedal up to my QTH and ease me through the latest problem. Now I'm glad I upgraded my gear, but it hurt like hell. I might be kicking and screaming, but I'm ready for Y2K!

Little Ad Pays off Nicely

BMHA is now running a classified ad in QST magazine in the Club section. It brings in about 12 requests per month for BMHA info and sample newsletter. This seems to result in about five new members, which is a pretty good response. The following is typical:

"Enclosed find an SAE for the return of information and a sample BMHA Newsletter. I didn't hear of your organization until I came across your little ad in the "Ham Ads" section of a recent QST. Since I love both Amateur Radio and biking, you really piqued my interest. I look forward to receiving your information soon."

—Philip J. Kroth, KA2QIK, Buffalo, NY
Needless to say, Phil is now a member.

Members Get Published

Our man Scott Farrell, KE4WMF, has scored again. His article "Double Your Fun While QRP" is featured in the September issue of CQ VHF. Scott tells how to build a battery switch that allows you to go from a low-voltage battery-saving setting to high power, when you need extra "oomph" to get into distant repeaters. This is Scott's second article for this magazine.

We hear that John Cumming, VE3JC, has an article in the October QRP -ARCI's *QRP Quarterly*.

Silent Key

Ken Wahrenbrock, KF6NC, of Downey CA, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Aug. 24th. At 79, Ken's long productive life had come to an end. He was ready to move on. Ken was best known to our members for organizing the BMHA Western States Roundup, in Paso Robles CA, in '94 and '95. His design for a stainless steel J-Pole antenna for bike use was a favorite for many of our members.

Ken was a strong cyclist---in June '96 he celebrated his 77th birthday by riding a century. On a ride shortly after that his front wheel came off and in the resulting accident Ken was permanently paralyzed. Unable to use his legs and with limited use of his arms, Ken had to abandon his beloved hobby: amateur radio. A communicator to the end, he was left with taping a pencil to his hand and typing out E-mail messages to his friends. (This information forwarded to us by David Herman, WA4HTM.)

BMHA Backs Mountain Bike Route

BMHA has donated \$200 to the Adventure Cycling Assoc. to pay for the research and mapping of 2 miles of the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route, which stretches from Canada to Mexico. We understand that the two miles will be in the Colorado sector of the route. And when the maps are updated and reprinted BMHA will be listed as the sponsor of those two miles.

New Record In RAAM Set by

Joe Walker's 70Plus Team

A four-man team of cyclists over age 70, led by member Joe Walker, KF6ORA, rode across the US in July and set a new record for the 2,907-mile course. Their time of 9 days, 1 hour and 7 minutes bested their '96 record by 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Walker's team was assisted night and day by a volunteer crew who drove support vehicles, fixed meals, massaged muscles, repaired bicycles, etc. Two BMHAers were an important part of the 16-member crew; Hank Burroughs, N7LVK, was chief radio Communicator and Shirley Landau, KF6ORD, served as chief Jack of all Trades.

Walker is always one who looks ahead. He writes, "I plan on going back into serious training (i.e. 150 to 200+ miles/week) in the year 2001, so I will be ready for my 80th year and my 4th RAAM Ride in 2003." More power to Joe and his team!

—Hartley Alley, NA0A, Editor

E-Mail: hartleyal@aol.com

ANTENNAS

WX2NJ's "Jurassic Duck" 2-Meter J-Pole

As a cyclist and amateur radio operator, and as the ARES Emergency Coordinator for Ocean County, I wanted to find a reliable, good performing antenna that does not depend on the metal frame of the bike as a ground plane. This is especially important for those who ride carbon fiber bikes. After exhaustive experimentation I came to the conclusion that the J-Pole was the antenna for the job. Trimming the J-Pole to work inside the cpvc pipe (because of capacitive effects) was a challenge and mounting it was another story.

The Jurassic Duck uses tough cpvc pipe which makes the construction durable, weather-tight, lightweight, easily removable, inexpensive, and may be painted any color. A flat black finish (don't use metallic paint) makes the duck look truly "jurassic" but at the same time it blends in with the surroundings—probably because most road surfaces are black. If you make one of these units from scratch, it will cost you about \$10. I don't think there's a better performing antenna for less.

WIRING: (see Figure 1)

Trim a 51 inch length of 300-ohm twin-lead as shown in the diagram below. Strip 1/2 inch of insulation from the bottom, twist the conductors together, and solder them. Do not make any electrical connection to the top end of the twin-lead.

Make a small notch in the insulation for each wire 1-1/4 inch from the soldered end. Don't cut the wires, just make an access-way through the insulation. In ONE of the twin-lead wires, make a notch (cutting both the insulation and the wire) that is 3/4 inch long, starting 14-5/8 inch from the "access-way" that you made.

Your coax should be at least 6 feet long so that you can route it comfortably. Solder the coax center conductor to the "access-way" in the twin-lead conductor that does NOT have the 3/4 inch section removed. Solder the coax braid to the "access-way" in the other twin-lead conductor (Figure 1).

Tape the coax to the twin-lead to make an attractive result. Although Figure 1 shows the coax offset from the twin-lead, this is for illustration — you don't need to do this.

HOUSING: (see Figure 2)

The length of cpvc ("sprinkler") pipe is not critical — it just needs to enclose the twin-lead antenna. The pipe is fairly stable as you ride because it is located behind you and thus blocked from most of the wind.

The cpvc pipe is 1/2 inch size, and is capped by a 1/2 inch plumbing cap at the top. At the bottom, mount a 1/2 NPT x 1/2 cpvc fitting (this will put a male threaded fitting onto the bottom of the pipe).

Put the twin-lead into the pipe, mounting it with hot glue or RTV. You may want to check SWR — adjust by trimming the top length and/or center gap. TRIM IN SMALL INCREMENTS. If you cut too much, you can solder a small length back in.

When you are happy with the SWR, finish gluing the twin-lead into the cpvc pipe. Terminate the coax with your favorite fitting (probably a BNC or SMA connector).

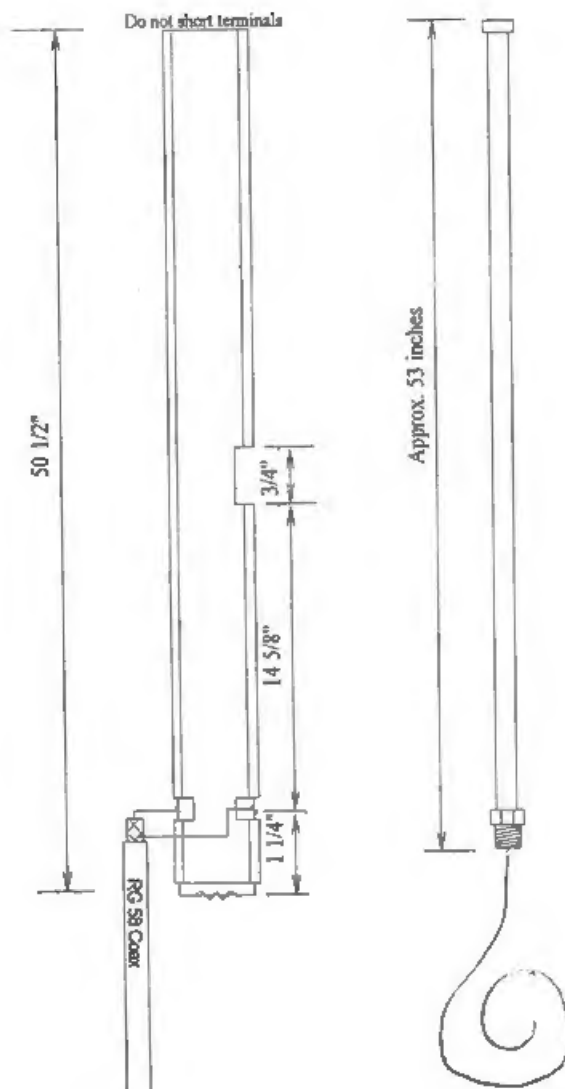


Figure 1.

Figure 2.

MOUNTING ON BIKE RACK:

Acquire a 1/2 inch cpvc shower fitting (this is a female plastic fitting with mounting holes so that it can be screwed to a wall). Drill a 5/8 inch hole in the bottom of the fitting so that your coax can pass through. Mount the shower fitting onto your bicycle rack (8/32 screws are a good choice). You do not need to worry about grounding because the J-Pole antenna does not require it.

Pass the coax connector through the shower fitting and thread the antenna pipe into the fitting. Secure the coax with "tie-wraps" or tape as required. The antenna can be easily unscrewed and removed for storage.

COMMENTS:

The dimensions shown yield an SWR of 1.1:1 at 146 MHz, with 1.4:1 at 144 and 148 MHz. Using an HT with 1 watt output will allow repeater operation for many miles. I've found simplex communication effective over 15 miles with 2.5 watts output.

I have mounted these antennas on bike racks which extend from the seat post (Delta brand) and regular mountain or
(cont. on next page)

touring racks and have had no problems with antenna stability.

Several hams I know have taken the "Duck" dimensions and inserted the twin-lead in fiberglass rods for marine use. Recently, one built a base station antenna using 1/2 inch PVC Schedule 40 pipe and RG-8 cable. All had nearly 1.1:1 SWR at 146 MHz using these dimensions.

On a recent MS-170-mile tour from Sandy Hook to Cape May, I maintained contact during the entire tour using five different repeaters. My signal report through most of the trip was full-quieting, and many riders asked me what the "stick" on the back of my bike was—giving me a chance to tell them all about ham radio. If you'd like to see photos of this antenna, connect with my Jurassic Duck web page:

<<http://members.aol.com/wx2nj/ares.html>>

If you have further questions, E-mail me at WX2NJ@aol.com. Good Luck!

—Bob Murdock, WX2NJ
534 Princeton Ave.
Bayville, NJ 08721

Q and A

(Q and A is a new feature. Send your questions to POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306, or E-mail to hartleya@aol.com. Our board of experienced bike-mobes will try to provide helpful answers.)

Q: Mitchel Stachowsky, KA7OGK, Elkwood VA writes: I have a problem finding a good, proven-durable antenna for bike-mobile 2M. I've been using a homebrew J-pole of 300-ohm ribbon mounted on a bike flagpole. The flex of the pole has caused the wire to break, causing this antenna to konk out on me several times. Is there any antenna out there that I can purchase, one with reasonable engineering that I can mount on a bike rack, and that has a fairly good dB gain?

A: Thanks for the membership and the letter. We have a very good answer for your antenna problem. The best one, in our collective members' experience (and I have used one and loved it for 14 years), is the Larsen NMO-150-HW. It's a half-wave antenna, thus requiring no ground plane. The Jan. '97 issue of the BMHA NewsLetter has an article about this antenna, how to mount it, etc. (A copy of the issue was mailed to Michel. —ed.) Bill Sharp, W8HI, the author of the article, is the former communications director for the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure. In that capacity, Bill developed a standard antenna setup, using the Larsen NMO-150-HW, for the 40 or so bike hams who handle communications for GOBA's 3,000 riders.

To order the NMO-150-HW antenna (\$36.50) you can go right to the manufacturer: Larsen Electronics, phone 800-426-1656, ext. 724, and ask for Cindee Spickelmier. She is used to dealing with bike riders. Tell her you're a member of Bicycle Mobile Hams of America. And be sure to order the feedline, Larsen GBR-1 (\$21.50). This feedline is cut to the exact length, 57", for use of this antenna on a bicycle. (Larsen is on Internet at www.larsenet.com.)

In addition, I highly recommend that you get a copy of the May '98 issue of CQ-VHF magazine. On page 53 you'll find a more detailed article by the same Bill Sharp titled "How to Wire a Bike for Ham Radio".

If you have further questions, just drop me an email at hartleya@aol.com.

—Hartley Alley, NAGA, Editor, BMHA NewsLetter

GEAR

Headset vs. SpeakerMike

(Here are comments by Bob Murdock, WX2NJ, on the equipment that he uses with his Jurassic Duck antenna—see page 2.)

Radio used on bike: Yaesu FT-50 carried in an old Performance water bottle pouch. I use a Yaesu SMA to BNC adapter to connect the antenna. The battery is a MAHA 7.2V, 1800 MAH NIMH pack. After 8 hours of use, the output is still 7.6 VDC! (Fully charged it's 8.1 VDC.)

Microphone: For short trips, I use the Yaesu MH-34A2B speaker/mike. It does pick up a lot of background and wind noise.

For the MS tour, I used a Yaesu VC-23 headset in the PTT mode. The headset was ty-wrapped to the outside of my Bell helmet, with the earphone positioned lightly over my left ear. I clipped the PTT button to my jersey. At speeds of 16 to 20 MPH, in full traffic, I had reports of clear audio with no background or wind noise. I could also hear both radio and vehicle noise with no problem.

—Bob Murdock, WX2NJ E-mail: wx2nj@aol.com

CLUBS

Adventure Radio Society

The Adventure Radio Society may be for you. This two-year old group with 300-plus members promotes outdoor use of amateur radio in conjunction with human-powered travel, e.g. hiking, bicycling, paddling and skiing. It sponsors contests, development of light-weight rigs and a monthly electronic magazine. All radio activity is QRP; most is CW HF. Off-the-air communication is by the ARS Internet web site <<http://www.natworld.com/ars>>, the QRP-L service and direct E-mail with members. Leaders are Russ Carpenter, AA7QU (russ@natworld.com), founder, Contest Chairman and Web Master; and Richard Fisher, NU6SN (nu6SN@aol.com), Membership Chairman and Executive Editor of *The ARS Sojourner*. Membership is free and is achieved by way of the ARS web site (see above) or Richard Fisher (nu6SN@aol.com).

Contests are: SPARTAN SPRINT, held monthly (CW HF battery-powered) with operation from any location and emphasis on light-weight rigs; FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEES, (CW HF) held annually featuring fifty operators who go into the field by human power and work anyone; and TOP OF THE WORLD (VHF) held along with the June ARRL VHF contest featuring operation from mountain tops reached by human power.

A recent edition of *The ARS Sojourner* included articles pertaining to bicycle camping, backpacking, backcountry 2-M FM operation and a portable set up.

—Dave Perry, NOIBT
3190 Endicott Dr.
Boulder, CO 80303

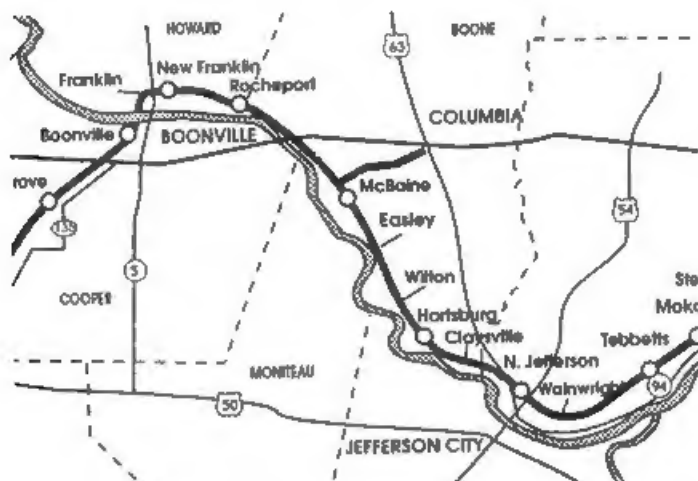
TRAVEL

Katy Trail's a Great Ride!

I don't have an exciting trip to report about hamming it up cycling across continents, or calling on my HT for aid to help sick camels in Egypt, or anything like that. But I would like to share the Katy Trail State Park, USA's longest rails-to-trail conversion, presently 185 miles long across mid-Missouri. It has been attracting riders from all over the USA and Europe. (The nearest section of it passes just 15 miles from my home. I ride on it a lot.) If you're wondering about the name "Katy", it comes from the nickname that locals gave to the railroad, the Missouri-Kansas-Texas, that ran on this railbed. Em-Kay-Tee (MKT) became Kay-Tee, or Katy.

The Katy Trail is smooth crushed limestone all the way, almost entirely flat with a few grades as much as 5%—the most challenging, longest grade being a 5-mile pull just west of Boonville. (It nearly drove me crazy! This is the longest, most persistent uphill grade in my 5 years of serious cycling. And we have fairly mountainous country in many parts of Missouri.) In the old days, trains had a hard time making it up that hill west of Boonville—sometimes not at all! Rails-to-Trails like the Katy are not entirely flat.

The Katy is very scenic, occasionally running within a stone's throw of the Missouri River. Along its length it passes by tiny towns and villages with many buildings over 100 years old, wineries, and very high limestone bluffs.



This 50 mile sector, above, of the Katy Trail (the heavy black line) shows how it follows the Missouri River, winding its way past little towns.

HOW TO GET THERE: The Katy Trail starts in a northwest St. Louis suburb, just 9 miles from the St. Louis airport. Fly in, cab to St. Charles, and rent a bike at The Touring Cyclist Shop. Scenic Cycles of Marthasville (38 trail miles from St. Charles) runs a shuttle service as well as a real biker's oasis of a shop there. They can make lodging arrangements at B&Bs very near the trail, or at scattered hotels not far away. They can shuttle you from the St. Louis airport. Call (314)433-2909.

Or you can do as I do: drive to the Katy Trail with your bike (it is a state park, so parking is readily available), cycle as many miles as you wish, then double back to your vehicle, drive to another trailhead farther down, and do it again. This way you're not far from your vehicle if anything happens and you're not at risk of being stranded many miles from nowhere. Some parts of the trail are very isolated and far from any services. Having a handheld vhf rig along reduces the risk somewhat, but this is far from foolproof—in the more isolated sections of the trail you are likely to find yourself talking to nobody but yourself, without a repeater in range.

NICE CYCLING: The crushed limestone is smooth riding for anything except skinny road tires, with a few scattered rougher spots here and there. Rolling resistance is higher than concrete or asphalt, but the almost perfectly flat terrain in most sections make up for this. Five days to do the 185 miles is recommended—some do it in 4 days with hard pushing. West to east riding is easier not only because of the winds, but because riding west from Boonville to Sedalia (32 miles) is mostly uphill. The rest of the trail is in the flood plain of the Missouri River.

ACCOMMODATIONS: There are very few places for tent and RV campers, as the Katy is young and campgrounds with showers and toilets have not yet developed. There are a few exceptions: Missouri State Fairgrounds at Sedalia has bathrooms, showers, and full RV hookups. New Franklin has the Katy Roundhouse with bike rentals as well as campgrounds, RV hookups, and a restaurant. At Bluffton (between Hermann and Jefferson City) check out the B&B run by Doug Rendleman, an avid cyclist. He also has tent camping but no RV hookups. And at St. Charles the Sundermeier RV Park has full hookups, camping, hot showers, and laundry.

WHEN TO COME: September and October are the best weather months, usually very nice. Spring is the monsoon season in Missouri, often more rainy days than dry ones. July and August are drier but a bit warm—average temp is upper 60s morning, about 90 degrees in the afternoon.

Many B&Bs along the trail are filled by reservation a month or two in advance. Columbia is a good base for the middle part of the trail, with many low price motels. I stayed near Boonville, and found it hard to beat for under \$30—cable TV and the Weather Channel included. Further east, Warrenton has a Motel 6, but it is 16 miles from the trail over curvy Highway 47 with no shoulders. This road is heavily traveled, and riding this is NOT recommended.

For general info about the trail call the Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources at 1-800-334-6946. Or connect with the award-winning website for Interactive Katy Trail, at <<http://katytrail.showmestate.com/>>

To learn more: Get the 193-page *Katy Trail Guidebook* by Brett Dufur, \$14.95, from Pebble Publishing, P.O. Box 2, Rochepot, MO 65279. (call (800)576-7322).

Let me know how you liked the ride!

—Walt Breville, KB0ZLZ

1149 Innsbrook Estates

Wright City, MO 63390

NEW MEMBERS

We're pleased to add these names to our Membership List:

Bill Adler, N3JAV, 3409 Ashley Ter NW, Washington DC 20008
Edward R Anderson, KA1NCS, 31 Galen St, Brockton MA 02402
Dori Byrd, KC7ZYQ, 2401 S. Owyhee, Boise ID 83705
Roger Byrd, KC7UFC, " "
Wade Byrd, KD7CJZ, " "
Jackie Dauster, 1037 Riverfront Dr, Bullhead City AZ 86442
Arthur Goldberg, KC2CRI, 82 Kings Way, Freshold NJ 07728

Ross F Guldenbrein, NW6R, 855 East 3rd St, Benicia CA 95410
Dave Holesovsky, KOIPH 521 W. 33rd St, Loveland CO 80538
Allan L Howell, WD8DKL, 120 S. Adams, Pendleton IN 46064
Maynard Jeffers, KB7VEX, 28510 40th Av. S, Auburn WA 98001
Ted A Karl, MD, 5 Jeffrey Place, New Hyde Park NY 11040
Richard A Mattner, WA2NCT, 159-01 28th Av, Flushing NY 11358
David E Reed, WA1ZWG, 10 Surrey Lane, Niantic CT 06357

With traditional ham friendliness, make contact with these new members, welcome them to BMHA, and help them with any problems they might have.

REMINDERS

Back Issues Still Available

You may purchase any of the twenty nine back issues of the BMHA NewsLetter for \$1.50 each, postpaid. For info on the contents of the various issues send a business-size SASE to: BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306-4009, and ask for the Index of Back Issues. This service available to members only.

If you tell us your bike tour plans we'll publish them in the NewsLetter and help make it possible for you to meet fellow BMMHAcers in person or on radio as you pedal along. Just send in your route and the dates.

When you write a plug for BMHA (and please do!) in your local club's newsletter, be sure to include this information: "The annual dues is \$10. To receive a sample copy of the BMHA Newsletter and other bike-mobile info send an SASE to BMHA, Box 4009-RC, Boulder CO 80306." This will save our club a lot of trouble and expense. The info will be sent next day.

BMHA Treasury Report Fiscal year, July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998.

Beginning bank balance:	3,690.98	
Monies received:	3,671.00	
Total:		7,361.98

Expenses:		
Printing and Xerox:	1,175.96	
Postage:	970.85	
Office supplies & expenses:	466.44	
Miscellaneous:	410.95	

Total Expenses:		3,024.20
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Bank balance on hand, June 30, 1998:		\$4,337.78
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BMHA NEWSLETTER

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We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork — anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa.

The BMHA is affiliated with Adventure Cycling Assoc., League of American Bicyclists (LAB), and Worldradio.

Phone: 303-494-6559 E-mail: hartleyal@aol.com

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ABOUT BMHA

For the information of our first-time readers

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a 'Stray' in the June '89 QST magazine asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile", signed by Hartley Alley, NA0A. Twenty five hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our eight subsequent forums have drawn increasingly larger audiences, and now BMHA is firmly established as a 'regular' at this world-renowned event.

This is the thirty third issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearing house for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles. Since the last issue of this newsletter we have added 14 new members. The total membership now stands at 464, with members in 46 states, and six countries. BMHA is affiliated with Adventure Cycling Association, the League of American Bicyclists (LAB), and Worldradio.

BMHA membership puts you in touch with a friendly and helpful group of bike-riding hams. You'll make contacts through our membership directory and E-mail address list, regular HF nets on 20 and 40 meters, annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention and other regional meetings, and of course through the BMHA NewsLetter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. Membership application blank on the next to last page.

EVENTS

Alaska Highway Tour Report— June 3-July 4, '98

We rode 1488 miles—maybe a few more, counting the side trips to see things of interest. We averaged 57.2 miles a day in 26 days of cycling. Our shortest day was 21 miles and our longest 81 — that was into Whitehorse and two days rest. (Four days involved train and/or bus transportation.) We started with 25 riders, five had to leave us at Whitehorse because of other commitments. So we finished the tour with 20 riders—all in good shape.

Asian Flu Hits the Tour:

It was a very successful trip—no problems except for the "unique-for-bike-trip-problem" of an attack of the Asian flu picked up by 2 of our members—probably from contact with cruise ship passengers in Skagway. We reacted quickly to the threat of its spreading. We announced that anyone who even thought he or she was coming down with a cold would be excused from kitchen duties. Very hot water was always available for hand washing before meals or before assisting with cooking, and for the washing of pots and pans after the meal. The two "flu-bit" members recuperated quickly, after a few days of half-days in the sawgagon.

We ate very well. The sawgagon driver and I did the shopping and those responsible for preparing the dinner gave us a list of what they wanted us to buy. We had some incredible dinners and desserts (would you believe English trifle?)



Tour leader Chuck, VE7MHA, about to join the coffee break gang (rear). Chuck's bike has aerobars along with his mud guards—maybe an odd combination, but perfect for the Alaska Highway.

Chuck held a meeting every evening after supper and everyone was encouraged to bring concerns — which they did. We all, as a group discussed each concern until it was solved to the satisfaction of everyone. We can't stress enough the value of a meeting EVERY DAY after the evening meal. A

lot of problems that tours experience could be eliminated by this simple procedure. Of course, a regular feature of the evening meeting was a rundown of the next day's route.

Our club, The Cross Canada Cycle Tour Society (CCCTS), started out as a seniors' club but we have more and more younger people joining. We have nearly 500 members now. The club offers a very busy schedule of rides, including several long tours in Canada, the US, and abroad, along with day rides in the Vancouver, BC area.

Here's the club info:

Cross Canada Cycle Tour Society, 6943 Antrim Ave., Burnaby, BC V5J 4M5. Phone: 604-433-7710.
E-mail: <cccts@vcn.bc.ca>
Website: <<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/cccts/>>

The next big CCCTS event is a bicycle/camping 23-day tour along the southern coast of South Africa, which Chuck and I have signed up for. No one we've asked knows if we should take our handhelds or not. (Take them! I've met many great people through my handheld on foreign trips. —Ed.)

Cheers,

—Lynn and Chuck Dick, VE7MGK and VE7MHA

E-mail: <chucklyn@interchange.ubc.ca>

3244 West 38 Ave.

Vancouver, BC V6N 2X6

BMHA Net.....Now on 40

Freq: 7.042 khz (Up 3, if QRM)

Time: 0200 UTC

Date: Every Wednesday (Tues. evening in the US.)

Have you tried the new 40 meter weekly informal BMHA net? After several months trial of the 40 meter frequency, we would like to encourage the use of this band for the BMHA net. The informal CW and QRP power, much like what we use on our bikes, appears to be a little more to the roots of BMHA.

For those who have or are using the BMHA 20 meter net frequency, feel free to continue to meet there, however we would like to encourage a move to the 40 meter frequency. (BMHA Net has met 1st and 3rd Sunday, at 14.253, at 2000 UTC and four hours later at 0000 UTC.)

Full details of the 40 meter net announcement is in the Jul/Aug/Sep 1998 Newsletter. Jim Varner, AE6N, will monitor and call "CQ BMHA" at regular intervals on 7042 khz at 0200 UTC for 45 minutes. Mike Nickolaus, NF0N, will call on those times when Jim is away from his QTH.

I would like to stress that this is not a formal CW net but rather it should be considered a "calling frequency" where you can meet other members. Although Jim and I may call "CQ BMHA" during the official time, we encourage anyone to meet on 7042 at any time. Bicycle mobiles are encouraged to use the frequency to call other BMHA'ers.

I hope to meet you on 40. Listen for my peanut whistle!

—Mike Nickolaus, NF0N

316 E. 32nd St.

South Sioux City, NE 68776

E-mail: menicko@avalon.net

ODDS & ENDS

Tips for Bicycle-Mobiling

USE A HALF-WAVE ANTENNA. Half-waves require no counterpoise. This makes it most suitable for mounting in any location on a bicycle. Plus, low SWRs are guaranteed.

USE A BOOM SPEAKER/MICROPHONE if you talk while on the move. A boom microphone stays positioned well, sounds very natural and is less likely to be dropped in the spokes. If the PTT switch is mounted near your brake levers, it's very easy to use without sacrificing control of your bicycle. (See *Field Test* below.)

NEVER USE THE HT'S BELT CLIP to secure the HT to the bicycle. Even though they feel sturdy, these belt clips will eventually fail when exposed to long-term road vibration.

MOUNT THE HT TO THE HANDLEBARS. Wearing an HT on a waist belt, for instance, is popular. But unless the battery and antenna are also worn, there are more wires tethering you to your bicycle in a crash. Also, mounting a PTT switch near your brake levers is more difficult.

Feel free to e-mail me at <ke4wmf@aol.com> for more information or explanations. —Scott Farrell, KE4WMF

Field-Testing a Boom-Mic

Premier SPM-400 Field Test: The Electronics Distributors' LEP-500Y, the boom mic featured previously with my bicycle mobile station (see Oct. '97 issue), is no longer in production. Therefore, I've been testing, using, and recommending the Premier SPM-400 as a replacement. I purchased one while at the Dayton Hamvention. I thought I would share my field observations with BMHA members:

The SPM-400 is the best mic I've used to date. Its boom is reversible, very adjustable, and it stays put. It rests on the ear lobe using a soft rubber retainer. The speaker is an in-ear bud, similar to stereophones. It's uncomfortable to stick all the way in the ear, but very comfortable when positioned

just inside the inner ear lobe. Aftermarket earphone pads may add to its comfort. The SPM-400 comes in three models, depending on which HT it will be used with. For more information, feel free to e-mail me at <ke4wmf@aol.com>

—Scott A. Farrell, KE4WMF

5432 Andrews St.

Buzzards Bay MA 02542-1505

Our HF Operators

BMHA has a group of six members who regularly operate on the HF bands while bicycle-mobile. Here's a rundown:

Elliot Kleiman, WA4YDK, of Hollywood, FL. Elliot was the first in the US to work all states (WAS) while bicycle-mobile. That was in 1981. In 1983 he was first to work DXCC—work 100 foreign hams while on the bike.

Elroy Shelley, WB9GIE, of Milwaukee, WI. (See Jan. '92 issue) as the world's smallest mobile station made contact with the world's largest mobile station—the radio club station on the USS Enterprise.

Ned Mountain, WC4F, of Roswell, GA. has for years been active on HF bike-mobile. His latest feat: making 19 contacts on the 17 meter band, including QSO's with hams in Taiwan, Japan, and Iceland. (See July '98)

Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U, of Ann Arbor, MI. Russ works mainly on CW (Morse Code, to non-hams) while bike-mobile. He says that it's fun, but the ham on the other end of the QSO seldom believes that he's really rapping out code from his bike. (See April '92)

Wayne Estes, W9AE, of Mundelein, IL. usually rides solo and takes great pride in his on-bike HF setup. (See Oct. '95 and April '96)

Bil Paul, KD6JUI, of San Mateo, CA. Bil uses solar power on his bike. When he's reached campground he has various light-weight wire antennas that he sling-shots up into a tree. (See Oct. '96 and July '98)

Our 33 back issues have many other interesting articles. For instance, 16 different ANTENNA articles, 11 articles on GEAR, bike setups, etc. Back issues are \$1.50 each postpaid. Send for the index. —Hartley Alley, NAOA, Editor

Membership Application

MemAPPL.wps 6/17/97 ipc newmem ipc e-mail newHAM NONham inews IQ's frost fwalc fern

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA

Box 4009, Boulder, CO 80306-4009

date _____

Individual \$10 _____ new member? _____ renewal? _____

(US or Canada)

Family \$15 _____

(limit: two persons)

Foreign \$15 _____ Donation \$ _____

Make check payable to BMHA, in US dollars or international money order.

Name _____ Call _____

Address _____ License Class _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____ @ _____

Age _____ Most miles bicycled in one day _____

BMHA's Official Logo

The next time you need to order new QSL cards, don't forget to include the BMHA logo in your design. Here's the official logo, as designed by Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U.

BICYCLE MOBILE



HAMS OF AMERICA

BICYCLE MOBILE



HAMS OF AMERICA

BMHA NEWSLETTER

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America
PO Box 4009
Boulder, CO 80306-4009

First Class Mail

COMMENTS

My wife (KC7ZYQ) and I are avid bike riders, not for competition but for the pleasure of it. We saw the bicycle-mobiling articles in the April '98 CQ VHF and we felt that this would be a lot of fun. We belong to the DA County Emergency Services and this would be a very good experience for both of us. Please send us any info you can and we will proceed to set up our bikes. 73's,

—Roger W Byrd, KC7UFC, Boise ID.

This is a typical response to our QST ad:

What I've been looking for.... To meld two of the greatest hobbies in the world! Please send BMHA info. I have 2M and CW HF only. Thanks & 73,

—Ross Guldenbrein, NW6R, Benicia CA.

(The Byrd family and Ross Guldenbrein are now members. —Ed.)

My original motivation to become an amateur was to participate in weather nets. However once I started to learn the code I became "hooked" and spend most of my time in CW now. I upgraded to Extra about 18 months ago. I've been biking for over 20 years with several 1-2 week tours and one 6-week trip from Fla. to NH. I will be riding in the GOBA tour this year. Can you put me in touch with someone to see if they would need any help with radio communications during the ride?

—Dave Haas, N1PT, Lancaster, New Hampshire

(We connected him with BMHA member and Communications Director, Bill Sharp, W8HI. —Ed.)

Back in the early 60's I knew a ham named Rick Dwight, K6JBV. He was a high school senior who toured up the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington, then across Canada carrying a small QRP CW transceiver. With it he was able to keep in touch with his parents. This was back in the vacuum tube days. I don't know what happened to Rick, he is not listed in the call book so I guess he let his license lapse. The point is that a small CW rig is a good way to stay in communications while bicycle touring.

It is my dream to do some multi-day touring; I certainly have the equipment for it. I didn't realize when I retired how easy it was to get involved in so many different projects. Lake Havasu has just contracted to have a company come in and do a bicycling and pedestrian study and I have been appointed to the Technical Advisory Committee.

On the fun side, I just finished wiring a 50 milliwatt transmitter. I was surprised it worked the first time, which is unusual for me.

—Jim Varner, AE6N, Lake Havasu City, AZ

I joined BMHA at the Dayton forum. I've really enjoyed the newsletters so far, and will be sending for the back issues when our Canadian dollar bounces back. My main interest is hf qrp cw operation, and I've spent the summer getting my bike-mobile set-up in shape! I have an article on my set-up which is going to be published in the QRP-ARCI QRP QUARTERLY in October. In casual "after-supper" rides during the summer, I have worked England, Spain, and about eight states running 5 watts on cw (mostly 20m and 30m).

I think there are a lot of members in QRP ARCI and the "Adventure Radio Society" who would be interested in BMHA. Will try to spread the word.

—John Cumming, VE3JC, Delaware, Ontario